GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1408
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2015
Fly Ash
Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any forest land has been acquired for any major project by public sector or private sector during the last three years;
(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and project-wise;
(c) whether any relaxations were extended for the purpose; and
(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (d)Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 inter-alia provides that notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force in a State, no State Government or other authority shall make, except with the prior approval of the Central Government, any order directing that any forest land or any portion thereof may be used for any non-forest purpose. Therefore, use of forest land for various development projects, including development projects in urban areas, requires prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. During last three years and current year, the Central Government has accorded approvals over 1,28,591 ha of forest land in 4,725 cases for public and private sector projects. State wise details of approvals granted by the Central Government for use of forest land for such activities is given at Annexure-I.Use of forest areas for such activities are approved by the Central Government under the Forest (conservation) Act, 1980 with adequate environmental safeguards and afforestation measures in lieu of forest land proposed to be utilized for developmental activities.

No specific relaxations have been extended by the Ministry for any major project by public sector or private sector. However, to streamline the process of the forest clearance, the Ministry has taken several initiatives which include web portal for online submission and monitoring the status of forest clearance proposals, GIS based decision support system to facilitate informed decisions on forest clearance proposals, delegation of powers to Regional Empowered Committees (RECs) constituted at each Regional Office to finally dispose of proposals involving diversion of 5 to 40 hectares of forest land (except the proposals relating to mining, regularization of encroachments and hydel projects) and all proposals involving diversion of forest land for linear projects irrespective of area of forest land involved, Notification of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Rules, 2014, introduction of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015 in the Parliament, etc.
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